

New app to fight youth unemployment

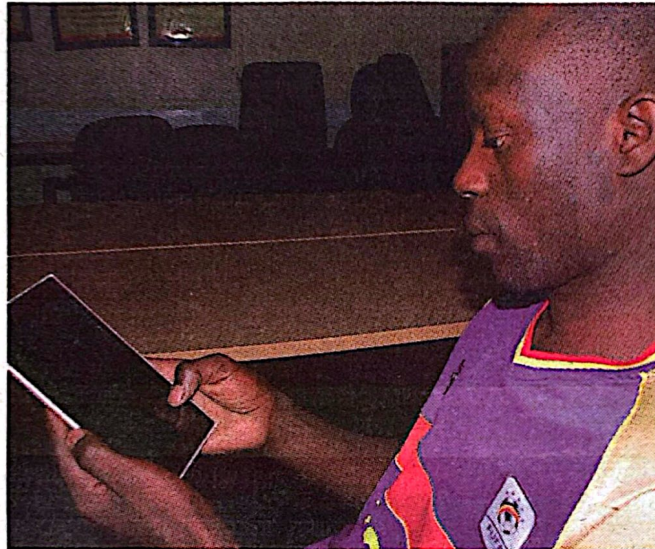
By Samuel Sanya

As a young child, seeing journalists on television made Ruth Nyambe's heart skip a beat.

She was always glued to the screen to see how the programmes were run, and thought to herself that her destiny was to be a journalist, so she studied mass communication at the university.

Even though she was fervent in pursuing her dreams, living in a single parent household, with a mother that struggled to cater for the academic needs of her siblings made it impossible for Nyambe to reach her goal.

"This has made it difficult for me to apply to higher learning institutions despite having good qualifications. I am in a life challenging situation, but given an opportunity to study at high learning institution. I can make use of it as it would be a life changing



Internet applications such YE aim are making it easier for the youth to get jobs. Photo by Lawrence Mulondo

opportunity," she said. Many young Ugandans identify with Nyambe's plight. Even more have gone to university where they spent colossal sums in tuition, accommodation, meals, stationery and other costs only to remain without a formal job for what seems like eternity.

Statistics

Statistics from the ministry of Gender estimate that around 400,000 youth are annually released into the job market to compete for about 9,000 available jobs.

The 2014 national census said 10.4 million Ugandans between ages 14 and 64 are simply counting their fingers as they are unemployed.

In order to change this status quo, the National Council of Folklorists of Uganda in collaboration with Lecturers from Kyambogo University

BETWEEN THE LINES:

The application has a video feature for youth to display their employable skills. They can use smartphones to connect with opportunities.

school of management and the department of performing arts with support from GIZ, YouMatch and IIDEA combined to create the Youth Employment (YE) software application.

Software application

The app was recently launched at the Kampala Capital City Authority Employment (KCCA) services bureau gardens in Nakasero, a leafy Kampala suburb.

Bonny Ongom, the YE app project manager, said the

application provides a platform for the youth in the East African Community to access employment opportunities through linkage to job adverts, entrepreneurial training, and grants or bids that are advertised.


Simon Peter Ntege, the lead developer of the app said: "The application has a video feature for youth to display their employable skills. They can now use smartphones to connect with employment opportunities instead of using them for entirely social communication," Ongom said.

"We have so many singers, and sports people - they can simply upload a video of themselves and they will be viewed by so many people in the East African Community (EAC)," he added.

Fatuma Nsereko, the co-ordinator Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) Women's Executive Chapter noted that the FUE's membership of 500 will be able to use the app to look talents which are not easy to locate.

Abel Bimbona, the clerk for Kawempe Division and immediate former employment services bureau supervisor noted that the app will place the EAC protocol into motion by improving mobility of labour across borders. He noted that the app will also enable youth entrepreneurship to flourish.

Bimbona said: "Embedded within this app is the ability to connect with entrepreneurs because opportunities for formal employment are not enough to solve the unemployment problem.



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